



**STATEMENT BY HEAD OF DELEGATION OF THE KINGDOM
OF LESOTHO**

During

**The SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
NUTRITION (ICN2), ROME ITALY**

19 -21 NOVEMBER 2014

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am humbled to have been afforded this opportunity to deliver my statement for my country during this second International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) on behalf of my delegation.

In 1992, member states committed themselves during the first International Conference on Nutrition (ICN1), to eradicate or trim down starvation and famine; widespread chronic hunger; under-nutrition, especially among children, women and the aged; micronutrient deficiencies, especially iron, iodine and vitamin A deficiencies; diet-related communicable and non-communicable diseases; impediments to optimal breast-feeding; and inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene and unsafe drinking-water before the next millennium.

During the 1996 and 2002 World Food Summits, and the World Summit on Food Security in 2009, Lesotho and other member states recommitted their efforts to address all challenges impeding good nutrition, where possible eliminating or reducing micronutrient deficiencies.

Subsequent to the above pledges, the country has put in places the following policies and strategies:

- National Action Plan for Nutrition (1992)
- Food Security Policy and Strategy (2005)
- National Strategic Development Plan (2012-2017)
- Draft National Nutrition Policy and Strategy(2014)
- Social Protection Policy and Strategy
- Infant and Young Child Policy (2010)

- National Legislation on Iodine (1999)
- Lesotho Food Composition (2006)
- Scaling up of school feeding scheme and universal free primary education

The Kingdom of Lesotho exclusive breastfeeding coverage has increased remarkably to 54% in 2009 from 22% (1996) and 36% (2004) with the involvement of Her Majesty Queen ‘Masenate Mohato Bereng Seeiso as Patron since 2007.

From 2013, the country has aligned itself with the international initiatives by joining the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement respectively.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to announce that in the post 2015 Development Agenda, Lesotho will improve Food and Nutrition Security by strengthening:

- Food diversification through the introduction of climate smart agriculture
- Institutional capacity in nutrition coordination
- Behaviour change communication feeding practices, HIV and AIDS, Ebola and social determinants of nutrition
- Integration of nutrition into HIV and AIDS programming (Nutrition Assessment Counselling Support (NACS))
- Control of diet related Non Communicable Diseases
- Monitoring and evaluation of nutrition interventions
- Forest and orchard establishment to enhance nutrition and food security

- Mobilisation of sufficient resources for nutrition (advocate for budget increase)

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

To date, I must acknowledge that the country has not made significant strides with reference to nutrition related Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), however, we are still committed to address issues of nutrition beyond 2015 for better health outcomes of our people.

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Before I conclude my statement, please allow me to reiterate the point I have just made that good nutrition is an important social determinant of health. Therefore, it will be top of government priorities in the Post 2015 Development agenda to conquer issues of under and over-nutrition double burden faced by our countries.

We are grateful with our King as the African Union (AU) nutrition champion.

The Government of Lesotho therefore, joins others in supporting the Rome Declaration on Nutrition and Framework for Action.

I thank you

KHOTSO PULA NALA!!!



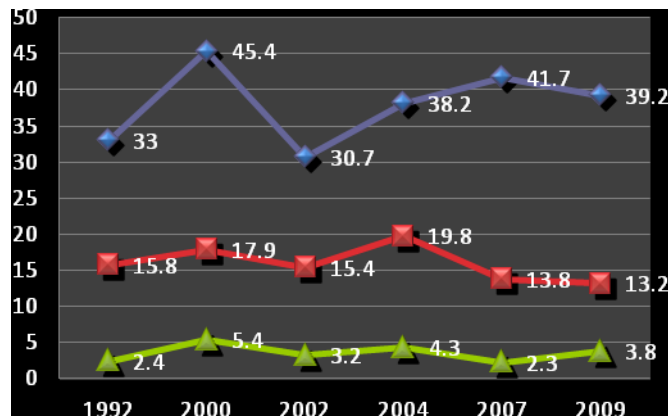


Improving Breast Feeding Practices In Remote Mokhotlong District of Lesotho

(2nd International Conference on Nutrition (ICN2) 19 -21 November 2014, Rome Italy)

Background

The Kingdom of Lesotho is a landlocked country inside the Republic of South Africa with its majority of population is rural and living on substantive farming. Malnutrition is one of the contributing factor to the high under-five mortality rate (117/1000 live birth), and poor performance in primary school (repetition rate of 19.4 per cent in primary school) according the country recent statistics. Most country health indicators have worsened over the years, and ongoing drought.



Malnutrition Trends in Lesotho 1992-2009 on Prevalence (%) of **wasting**, **stunting (S)** and **underweight (U)** amongst under five year children in Lesotho

Kwashiorkor and marasmus are the most common causes of admissions and deaths among under-five children in health facilities in Lesotho. 4% of children in Lesotho are wasted and 1% is severely wasted. Wasting is highest in children 6-8 months (11%). Wasting represents the failure to receive adequate nutrition.

Mokhotlong “The place of Bald Ibis” includes the highest terrain in the [Maloti Range](#) and the source of the [Senqu River](#), Lesotho’s primary watershed. It is one of the remote areas of Lesotho where diamond is mined.



Mokhotlong District landscape

Breastfeeding, strategy to reduce infant mortality

In the first ICN1 (December 1992), “governments including Lesotho, pledged amongst other commitments to make all efforts to eliminate or substantially reduce impediments to optimal breast-feeding”. Encouraging exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of an infant’s life is a critical intervention since mother’s milk is the best in micronutrients, sterile and readily available.

To prevent malnutrition, the Baby-friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) was launched by WHO and UNICEF in 1991, to implement practices that protect, promote and support breastfeeding. BFHI is working to improve the links between health facilities and communities. Therefore Mokhotlong district has breastfeeding support groups within the following health facilities: Mokhotlong Hospital, Malefiloane, Tlhanyaku, Libibing and Linakeng Health Centres.



Responsibilities of breastfeeding support groups are:

- ✦ To help breastfeeding mothers referred to them after discharge from health facilities.
- ✦ To identify malnourished children from the community by looking at the clinical signs and then refer them to the health facility.



Breastfeeding Support Group

Breastfeeding Celebration

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is an annual celebration which is being held every year from 1 to 7 August in more than 120 countries. This year it was celebrated on the 12th September 2014 in Mokhotlong district at Malefiloane Health Centre.

The best practice is that Her Majesty Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso is the Patronage of breastfeeding since 2007. Her involvement has seen the increase of breastfeeding coverage to 54% (2009) from 36% (2004), and 22% (1996). Mothers get confidence when they hear from her majesty that she breastfed her children exclusively for the first six months during these celebrations. This is set as a good example to other mothers that breastfeeding **EXCLUSIVELY** really works because even the queen practiced it.

Commemoration Activities

During these events, prize in kind including food parcels and basic farming tools to mothers and families of best breastfed and well immunized children in the community where the celebration took place.



With the ongoing drought and erratic weather, the Ministry of Health and its partners (WHO, UNICEF, FAO, WFP...) provide the support in kind so that people appreciate the importance of breastfeeding, immunizing their little ones and observing their growth monitoring.



A mother prize winner, collecting a food parcel

We heartedly thank our partners supporting us to improve nutrition in the country.